

W5YI REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable. May be reproduced providing credit is given to The W5YI Report.

Dits & Bits

Fred Maia, W5YI, Editor, P.O. Box 10101, Dallas, TX 75207

★ In This Issue ★

Status: Hemisphere Wide Reciprocity
Status: Docket 87-14, 220-222 MHz
Status: PRB-3 - Special Ham Calls
Mass Media Bureau Chief is a Ham
W2NSD/1 Seeks U.S. Vice Presidency
Amateur Radio Calls Issued to 9/1
Ham Radio Comes to Thailand
Broadcasters Still Want FM2 Band
Police Ham Charged as Hacker
Video Cassette Taping Report
TV Ratings and "People Meters"
Automatic Police Vehicle Location
Pirate Broadcasting Follow-up...
and much, much more!

VOL. 9, Issue #18

\$1.50

PUBLISHED TWICE A MONTH

September 15, 1987

Status of Amateur Radio Rulemaking

We made a routine call to the FCC on Friday to find out the status of amateur radio rulemaking. We spoke to Ray Kowalski, Chief of the Private Radio Bureau's Special Service Division which oversees the Personal Radio Branch and amateur radio.

Ray said that the FCC would be planning their work schedule for the upcoming and subsequent quarters next week. "We are getting back into the swing of things. Things are getting cranked up (after the August FCC recess)"

"The major undertaking will be the proposal to revamp §Part 97," he said. "The staff has already started and we have been working very hard on it. There will be no rule changes that I would call startling. While it is not going to propose 'no code,' to say that the revised Part 97 would be purely 'cosmetic' would not be accurate either."

"We will be grouping rules together better than they are now. New sections will be created to deal with the subject matters that are current today." Ray specifically mentioned amateur operating procedures for emergency communications and packet radio. "We want to define what is possible to do when ...how do you do it ...what are the ground rules. Emergency communications do not always have to be 'life and death' situations."

HF third party packet operation probably will not be proposed in the new rules, Ray said. The FCC has approved some stations to participate in third party traffic handling below 50 MHz "to get information on how this might work and what the operating parameters should be. We will leave this area alone until we get the operating experience that this experiment will provide." Ray commented that he had not heard of any abuses of packet traffic handling by amateurs.

HEMISPHERE WIDE AMATEUR RECIPROcity

CITEL, the InterAmerican Telecommunications Conference has concluded in Lima, Peru, with the proposal for a hemisphere wide amateur reciprocal operating arrangement being adopted. The treaty, called the Inter-American Amateur Radio Operators Convention, was immediately signed by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Haiti, Peru, Suriname, United States and Uruguay. Canada surprisingly is not a member of CITEL which tends to be primarily a Spanish middle and South American telecommunications organization. The U.S. delegation was headed up by Bill Jahn of the State Department.

Strangely, Mexico did not sign the document at the conference even though the final form of the document was drafted by Mexico with the help of the United States. "It is virtually almost their product." They can

(and probably will) sign the document later in their own country. "There are procedures in place," Ray said, "for taking the agreement home, circulating it and then signing. Nothing should be concluded by who signed and who did not. Even the countries that have signed may need further ratification (in their own countries.)"

The treaty, which facilitates reciprocal amateur operation in our hemisphere, will take effect once a certain number of countries sign the treaty. It will be the vehicle by which Mexico offers reciprocal amateur licensing with the United States.

ON FCC DOCKET 87-14, THE 220 ISSUE....

The FCC's Office of Science and Technology has not yet contacted the Private Radio Bureau to get their views on Docket 87-14 - the NPRM the proposes to allocate the first 2-MHz of the 220-222 MHz ham band to the Land Mobile Service for narrow band voice operation.

"That is not unusual. They have a mountain of comments to plow through. I went through the computerized list of who commented and got tired of asking for more 25 line readouts ...I never got to the end of the list! Typically what OET will do is to circulate a proposal for resolution to us after they analyze the comments. What I think we will do is ...instead of waiting for them to request our input on their proposal, is to simply write a memo to them with our (Private Radio Bureau) views on it."

SHOCKING COMMENTS ON 87-14 FROM FIT!

We had also heard rumors that one of the organizations that proposed to become an SCSC - Special Call Sign Coordinator, had filed comments supporting business use of the 220-MHz ham band. PRB-3 proposes to privatize the issuance of secondary ham call signs of choice. We had a copy of Forestry Industries Telecommunications comments picked up and flown to us by Federal Express. Their comments were professionally completed by the Washington law firm of Fletcher, Heald and Hildreth on behalf of James H. Baker, FIT's Executive Vice President.

FIT not only supported the NPRM to reallocate 2 MHz of the 220-MHz ham band to Land Mobile, they argued that this was not enough! They asked that the FCC add another megahertz (to 223 MHz) thereby completely destroying the amateur 220 repeater band plan that begins at 222.32 MHz. The exact wording from their comments filed on May 21, 1987:

(Quote) "FIT believes that a 2 MHz land mobile allocation in the 216-225 MHz (band), while highly welcome, would not be sufficient to accomodate adequately the requirements for additional VHF frequencies in the land mobile services for both government and non-government users, even with the contemplated 5 KHz channelization. The forest products industry alone has substantial requirements for VHF frequencies. Other services, in the government and the nongovernment categories, most likely need VHF frequencies as well. FIT suggests, therefore, that the land mobile allocation be increased to 3 MHz, to cover the 220-223 MHz segment of the band. A three MHz allocation would also provide the needed separation between transmit and receive frequencies for mobile relay operations, a mode of operation essential for land mobile communication systems serving large rural areas. FIT recognizes that the band is used substantially by the Amateurs. However, in view of the severe shortage of VHF frequencies for land mobile communications, and given the fact that Amateurs have available to them the 144-148 MHz (segment) as well as the 430-440 MHz bands, FIT believes that the public interest, overall, would be best served by allocating the 3 MHz between (the) 220 and 223 band to the land mobile radio services." (End Quote)

And this is the firm that has applied to the FCC to issue you a \$25.00 amateur call sign of your choice — plus another 5 bucks for a wall certificate! FIT's comments on 87-14 sort of underscores that their allegiance lies with business rather than amateur radio interests.

STATUS OF AMATEUR SUBMITTED PETITIONS

A petition was submitted by Ray K. Adams, N4BAQ, of the Western Carolina ARS-VEC on behalf of all VEC's seeking a change

in the Morse code testing rules. Specifically, the VEC's asked that the rules provide (in Part 97.29(c)) for telegraphy tests of longer than 5 minutes and that the code examination format revert back to the previous rules that required knowledge (but not necessarily testing) on all alphabet letters, numerals and certain punctuation and operating procedure signs.

Kowalski said that the petition had been received and would not be dismissed "out of hand." It will be put out for a 30 day comment period and handled routinely.

The petition by the ARRL to change station identification to "prefix first" by aliens operating under a reciprocal license is also under consideration by the FCC, "but not one of our higher priority items. We will work it in when we have time. It might find its way into the §Part 97 review." The League wants the U.S. prefix to be identified first rather than after the foreign call sign in keeping with current IARU policy.

NEW MASS MEDIA BUREAU CHIEF IS A HAM!

Ray Kowalski told us that a new FCC Mass Bureau Chief had been chosen to replace Jim McKinney who was promoted to the White House as a presidential assistant. The new Mass Media Bureau Chief is an amateur radio operator ... "Lex" (actually Alex D.) Felker, N4LF - his initials. His responsibilities will involve broadcast rulemaking.

STATUS OF PRB-3, SPECIAL HAM CALLS

"We are now at the point of making three decisions on PRB-3," Ray said. "The first is, should we proceed with the program ...to issue specific amateur call signs at all. The thrust of the American Radio Relay League's comments was that we should not but that if we were going to, they would step forward - but that we should not. I think that raises a legitimate issue. We perceive that feelings run high on both sides of the threshold issue ...to do it at all."

"Second, if the answer is 'yes', we should go forward, then do we have enough in the record at this time to make a choice? Did

we ask the right questions ...did we ask for the right showings ..have we followed all of the procedures that ought to be followed in order to select a special call sign administrator or do we need some additional procedure on some perceived deficiency?"

"Third, if the answer to that is 'yes', then who is it? Who will it be? Whose proposal was the best that met all of the criteria. We will be taking that up this quarter (starting October 1st.) We will plan when the action will be made public next week. I would think that it would be one of the earlier, higher priority items this season."

WAYNE GREEN SEEKS VICE PRESIDENCY....

The following tidbit is being circulated by CompuServe, an over-the-phone line personal computer data service.

"Wayne Green, (W2NSD/1), the man who made Peterborough, N.H., a hub for computer-related magazine publishing, says he's now interested in a new job: The Vice Presidency of the United States.

He says in announcing a bid for the Republican nomination to the nation's No. 2 job, "I'm not doing this for Wayne Green's ego. I'm doing this to get the message out" that the U.S. is falling behind in technology and finance."

"Mainly," the 65-year-old Green told United Press International, "I want to get the message out that America can and should be concentrating on building people's income, building industry, getting back industries that we have lost, ...that we have given away to Japan."

Writes UPI, "Green, who announced his candidacy at a (Concord, N.H.) fast-food restaurant, said he hopes his campaign can do away with the present system of having the Republican and Democratic presidential nominees select their vice presidential running mates."

The publisher said that having the vice president "Wait for the accident to happen is

SAME DAY SHIPPING! (Be certain shipping charges are included.) (Complete Morse Code Course: 0-21 w.p.m.=\$29.95, ppd) PLUS Postage \$1.25
 Advanced Data Class \$4.00
 \$3.50 plus postage
 \$3.00 plus postage
 \$2.50 plus postage
 \$2.00 plus postage
 \$1.50 plus postage
 \$1.00 plus postage
 \$0.50 plus postage
 50¢ each manual.
 75¢
 50¢

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER EXAMINER?

I am currently licensed Extra Class amateur radio operator and I have been a ham since [redacted] years ago. I have never had my station or license revoked or suspended. I do not own a significant amount of equipment.

September 15, 1987

● Robert D. McClaran, WA4ZGG, has reopened McClaran Sales, Inc., of Vero Beach, Florida for the distribution of Aluma towers. Bob is probably the only dealer in the U.S. who accepts ham gear or computers on trade towards the purchase of a tower. (Box 2513, Zip 32961. 305-567-8224)

● We have had reports that an Extra Class amateur station in Los Angeles, California, is transmitting what appears to be Krishna religious doctrine under the guise of code practice at 15 words per minute by automatic means for hours at a time. (Frequency twenty meters, 14.055 MHz.) The transmitting station periodically transmits an address from which listeners can obtain additional information.

● According to accounts in the radio broadcast media, there is still an ongoing campaign by FM broadcast interests to get the FCC to allocate a portion of the 220-230 MHz band to FM broadcasting - a so-called "FM2" band. The FCC's Office of Science and Technology previously rejected an RNJ (Radio New Jersey) proposal to allocate the 225-230 band to FM broadcasting since it is used by the military. Now RNJ president Larry Tighe, is trying to organize a broadcaster letter writing campaign supporting taking FM broadcast spectrum from the amateur 220-225 MHz band. He'll get very little sympathy from OET. They already have some 20 volumes of comments to review principally opposing OET's proposal to give 220-222 MHz to land mobile. Besides, 220-MHz broadcasting in Region 2 is illegal under the international Radio Regulations. While FM2 can't happen, it does highlight to continuing pressure our amateur frequencies are always under.

● My mail indicates that some long time amateurs are fed up hearing about Novice Enhancement and the need to increase the amateur ranks. They feel it is time that the FCC did something for the 'old timers'. One recently wrote us suggesting "Why not 'grandfather' amateurs operating in excess of twenty-five years with benefits of the top class license?"

● Another protest is being lodged against the #2 and #3 certificate winners of the (CQ

Magazine) 160 Meter WAZ Award via an anonymous computer letter writing campaign. The letters are sent those who work 160 meters. "You know who beats you in the pileups," the unsigned letter says. Readers that feel skeptical about the awards are urged to express their concerns to any of four listed CQ Magazine people.

● Clarification - In our August 15th newsletter we offered to forward successful Form 610 Novice applications to the FCC - since we mail Technician and higher class applications to the Commission every day. We certainly did not intend to insinuate that Novice applications must be sent to a VEC for forwarding to the FCC. There are two amateur volunteer testing programs - one is the older Novice program which now takes two (General or higher class) VEs - the other is the newer VEC system for testing Technicians and up. (VEC system examinations require three VEC accredited examiners.) Novice applications really should be sent direct to the FCC by the volunteer examiners. (FCC, P.O. Box #1020, Gettysburg, PA 17326) Form 610's of those who upgrade further must be forwarded to the appropriate VEC for screening and forwarding to the Commission.

● Having TVI problems when on HF? AMECO has introduced two new TV/FM High Pass Filters - one for 75 ohm application, the other for 300 ohm twin lead. The filters, which contain 9 shielded sections (with a total of 25 elements in 5 individually shielded compartments) provide 70 db of attenuation below 50 MHz. Price: \$12.95 from AMECO, 220 E. Jericho Turnpike, Mineola, NY 11501.

● Dayton Amateur Radio Association announces their 1987 scholarship winners. They are: Michael Wozniak, KD8TA, of Martin's Ferry, Ohio; Carol Lee Colby, KA8LF, Midland, Michigan; Robert Jackson, KA7OCV, Tucson, Arizona and Douglas Kleeman, KA9LWN of Shawano, Wisconsin. Ninety applications were received from 32 states for the DARA Scholarships.

● W87PAX, the Indianapolis Pan Am Games official Amateur Radio Station has been a smashing success! The operation logged 23,270 QSO's - (20K on voice, 3K CW.) Over

September 15, 1987

8,000 of the QSO's were with DX stations in 139 different countries. Thirteen ham bands (160 meters through 1296 MHz) were operated by 44 operators. Twenty meters was the most popular, accounting for nearly 60% of the contacts. Up to nine different transmitters were on the air simultaneously! Six different transmission modes were used - SSB, CW, AM, FM, ATV and packet.

● Police ham hacker - A front page story in The Virgin Islands Daily News tells about Herb Schoenbaum, KV4FZ of the St. Croix police department using a legislative computer to look at the private files of Republican Senator Holland Redfield. A complaint was made to Senate president Iver Stidiron and the police are conducting an internal investigation. Schoenbaum said he had permission to use the system, but didn't look at any of Redfield's files. The newspaper report said that Schoenbaum bragged at a GOP women's luncheon at which he was a speaker that he had gotten information from Redfield's files. Apparently it was intended to be politically embarrassing to Redfield. The bad blood stems from the 1984 GOP presidential national convention. Redfield headed up the delegation and Schoenbaum was an alternate.

● The Canadian Radio Relay League has re-elected CRRL President Tom Atkins, VE3CDM, and Vice President Harry MacLean, VE3GRO, by acclamation for a further two year term commencing January 1988. Tom was one of the founding fathers of CRRL, the first Ontario director of CARF - the Canadian Amateur Radio Federation, and has been elected member of the I.A.R.U. Region 2 Executive Committee for the past few years. Harry is probably best known for his Canadian newsFronts column in QST.

● Data Quest, a market research firm, reports that - with 50 million people expected to be working at home by the year 2,000 - personal photo copiers will develop into a consumer item. 500,000 will be sold annually by 1990. Canon U.S.A. has 80% of the market, Sharp Corp.: 12%. (300,000 units will be sold this year!)

● Radio Shopping Show coming this fall! "Value Radio/Shop Around the Clock" is

designed for AM stations to increase their income during the overnight hours of 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. AM'ers will get a 5% commission on goods sold. The program will be satellite delivered to radio stations.

SPECIAL VIDEO CASSETTE TAPING REPORT

Be on the lookout for (JVC) "S-VHS" and (Sony) "ED-Beta" format VCR recorders and tapes. Nearly every manufacturer will have them. Cost will be about 25% higher than standard VCR decks ...but worth the difference. Super-VHS and Extended Definition-Beta VCR's not only offer high definition recording/playing but also can play the regular (older) conventionally recorded tapes.

The high quality comes from increased horizontal lines and metal particle tapes. ED-Beta offers slightly better resolution than S-VHS - 500 vs. 440 lines. Video software professionals don't like them since third and fourth generation copies are as good as the original! The new technology was developed in anticipation of HDTV - high definition television broadcasting. Eighty percent of all home video recording will be in a high definition format by 1990. Movies are on the way. Blank tape will be expensive - at least to start. Plan on spending \$20 for a T-120 cassette.

DAT (Digital Audio Tape) VCR recorders (from a single company, the Marantz DT-84) could be available as early as next month. Ninety minute blank DAT tapes will retail between \$10 and \$15. While the technology has been in place for some two years now, legislative questions have been holding back U.S. marketing. Congress (who still has a strong anti-Japan sentiment) are under pressure from compact disc makers to regulate DAT hardware. And some Japanese makers reportedly do not want to provoke Congress further.

Legislation proposed requires DAT recorders to electronically read an implanted "Copycode" signal stored on "notched" digital music recordings so that they can't be effectively reproduced. The "Copycode" is added to DAT recorders by means of a special microchip. Lobbyists are telling Congress that without this feature, the booming CD market

will be destroyed since consumers will be able to make their own high quality digital recordings.

Audio engineers aren't convinced. They say that "Copycode" erodes the big advantage of digitally recorded music - its brilliant, concert-like frequency response. They also feel pirates are going to find a way around "Copycode" by changing the chip and you can't legislate against consumers who modify their own VCR's. CD's are fast replacing the standard LP record. DAT recorders are not compatible with existing (analog) VHS/Beta video tapes.

More headaches are on the horizon for the nation's audio/video professionals. Dual-deck VCR's ...recorders specially made to reproduce pre-recorded tapes with superior quality. The video software industry likes these even less! An Arizona firm will be importing dual-deck "VCR-2" recorders shortly.

The home video boom is also hitting television broadcasters very hard! They are concerned - and they should be! In depth studies of home tapers have been gathered. Nationwide, according to Abitron Ratings Co., VCR penetration now stands at 49.6% - higher than cable, but is passing 60% in some markets. VCR penetration was 35% just a year ago.

Broadcasters say that, with 30 cable channels and home video, their audience ratings are suffering badly and that viewing habits are changing. VCR owners play back videos three times as much during the summer months as compared with other portions of the year. Cable penetration stands at 48.8%.

Saturday night is the hardest hit when 10% of all VCR owners are playing back videos. Fifty percent of VCR playback takes place on the weekend - from Friday to Sunday evening. Twenty-three percent of all playback occurs during prime time. Average VCR household has its cassette recorder in a 'play' mode an average of 5 hours a week, 'record' mode 3.5 hours a week. These figures all add up to big trouble for broadcasters. Clearly, the broadcast audience is shrinking.

A New York based research firm says

that by 1995, Americans will spend one-fourth of all viewing time watching pre-recorded video while the combined broadcast network audience share falls to 45%.

The report estimates that more than 4 billion tapes will be rented that year, representing \$20 billion in revenue. They predict that home video will replace broadcast TV as the nation's entertainment medium of choice during the next decade.

● A \$5.4 million high-definition television production studio is in the process of opening here at Dallas' Las Colinas corporate park. It will be the first HDTV production facility located outside of New York. HD Studio Dallas will use Sony 1,125 scanning line video equipment. Japan plans direct broadcast satellite transmission of HDTV signals in 1990, the U.S. about three years later. Although HDTV television sets aren't yet available, projects shot with the new technology can be transferred to 35mm film or converted back to the U.S. standard 525-line video format for use until HDTV is available. Another plus is that the high definition video format can be transferred to the European 625-line definition standard without losing the resolution afforded by present U.S. standards. Europeans like our TV programming, but not our production quality.

● "Telecassette", a new satellite-delivered home video buying service will premiere October 15th. Viewers will be able to order and download home videos by dialling an 800 number.

● Hi-Tech Mate-Seeking - Bookstores are selling and video shops in California are now renting a new classification of VCR prerecorded tape. Called "VideoMates", the cassettes are actually an electronic version of the "personals" run in magazines. The \$19.95 tapes can be rented in versions intended for men or women viewers. Each contain 60 carefully selected individuals. Only one in ten singles that applies to the service ever makes it to the video. VideoMate will also forward your letter to the ones you are interested in for \$15.00. The company plans to release more cassettes. (What happens when an individual is no longer in "circulation", but their

data back to a ratings facility over a viewers (rather than dedicated) phone lines. It can be hooked to a cable converter - or operated as a stand alone unit if a viewers has only broadcast TV capability. The advantage of the system is that it also can be used for PPV (Pay Per View) program ordering. The system also has potential for home shopping and utility service monitoring.

- Floppy disks are selling - but are costing less! The International Tape/Disc Association says U.S. sales of the most popular 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " floppy are down 16% to \$330 million, but shipments are up 40%! The reason? Retail price of floppies has nose-dived! The 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " disk accounts for 60% of all floppy sales. It is hard to believe, but when first introduced, 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " disks sold for up to \$5.00 each! Now, if you are paying more than 25¢, you are paying too much! Call 1-800-634-3478 to order 200 (DS/DD or SS/DD soft sectored) 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " disks at 25¢ each (\$50.00 plus \$5.00 shipping. \$9.00 shipping to APO's, FPO's and Canada, \$12.00 shipping to Alaska, Hawaii, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.) This includes sleeves, write protect tabseven reinforced hub rings! (The price is 27¢ if you only want a hundred.) The firm that sells these, Micro Center, 1100 Steelwood Road, Columbus, Ohio, 43212-9972 has been rated as one of the top 50 companies in Inc. Magazine's 500 fastest-growing, privately held businesses in America. Micro Center has a five year growth record of over 8,000%! They will give you your money back if you are not satisfied for any reason.

- It sort of looks like the spun-off "Baby Bells" won't be going in the long distance telephone business anytime soon. Judge Harold Greene ruled that the seven Bell regional operating companies can expand their non-telephone services and transmit services offered by other firms, but are prohibited from manufacturing equipment or offering long distance service. Look for your local phone company to get involved in home banking, tele-shopping, information bata bases and other financial services delivered over the phone lines. They can't offer these services themselves, but can sell this capability to other firms who will offer it to you.

- According to FBI statistics, one in

four homes will be burglarized over the next four years. As a result, Heath/Zenith is entering the home security market. They will offer a complete line of passive infrared home security products - from a \$44.95 motion sensor light control to a \$399.95 complete, wireless home security center. By 1990, \$2.7 billion will be spent on home security systems.

AUTOMATIC MOTOR VEHICLE LOCATION....

Magnavox has won a contract to provide an Automatic Motor Vehicle Location System for the town of Fairfield, Connecticut. It will be used to track the movement and status of police cars and other emergency equipment.

Each vehicle will be fitted with a compact navigation processor which determines the distance and direction travelled from a known starting point. Speed input comes from a transducer interfaced to the vehicle's speedometer and the direction of travel is supplied by an electronic compass.

The vehicle's processor includes a small receiver that uses signals from orbiting navigational satellites. At intervals, satellite data is used to recalibrate the vehicle's computed position, cancelling out errors that may have accumulated over time. A communications processor controls digital data exchange with with base station. Driver access to the AVLS system is not necessary and all vehicle equipment is mounted in the trunk.

At the base station, the dispatcher monitors the movements of all vehicles on a large high-resolution video color map display. The color of each vehicle on the screen indicates its current status (green for available, yellow for dispatched to non-emergencies, red for emergency dispatched.)

An existing radio channel is used for the data link between vehicles and the base station. A central computer periodically triggers an automatic response from the vehicles which sends back formatted position and status reports. Short messages between the driver and dispatcher can also be sent through AVLS. These are automatically logged by the computer.

September 15, 1987

PIRATE BROADCASTING FOLLOWUP REPORT

The public doesn't seem to perceive illegal broadcasting to be a very serious crime. Quite the contrary, radio pirates often come across as heroes or martyrs promoting a worthy cause. At least that is the conclusion one comes to from reviewing media coverage. Most illegal broadcasters are radio enthusiasts ...broadcasting at low power from college closets and such. Real pirates use real power and have motives other than "playing radio announcer."

It has been a 18 months since John R. MacDougall, KA4WJA, of Ocala, Florida, a ham operator, home satellite dish dealer and part-time satellite uplink operator jammed HBO's midnight movie. He uplinked a video protest which was seen by millions in place of a portion of the regular HBO movie. MacDougall was protesting satellite programmers who were, one-by-one, scrambling their signal and charging back-yard dish owners for what was previously received free. He was tracked down, and when FCC authorities closed in, he gave himself up. MacDougall accepted a fine/probation plea bargain arrangement which also involved a one year suspension of his amateur license but no revocation.

While hard to believe, but now comes word (from the September 7th edition of Electronic Media, a broadcast/cable/satellite industry publication) that MacDougall has inspired a proposed new TV series entitled, "Captain Midnight, Thief of the Airwaves." Can you believe this? The 'Captain' will pretend to interrupt viewers' regular TV channels to beam them clips of the best and worst TV shows from around the world. Will this unbelievably weak plot work?

Independent producer, Action Time is developing the late night vehicle for London-based Channel 4, with possible syndication to the U.S. market if 'Captain Midnight' takes off.

The most recent pirate incident involved a group of rock'n rollers that popped up on the AM/FM broadcast and short/long wave bands on July 23rd. They called themselves RNI for Radio New York International.

We wondered why not RNYI and learned that RNI was once a famous (infamous?) offshore European pirate broadcaster who identified his Radio Northsea International as RNI.

The US-RNI, anchored offshore in international waters and flying a Honduran flag, ran 5 KW on 1620 KHz - basically a clear channel frequency. It was heard all over the United States. SWL's by the thousands left the short wave "pirate alley" to listen to 1620 kHz. The station played "free-form" music (whatever that is) and solicited advertising.

It all came to an end on July 28th when FCC officials boarded their 175-foot Honduran-registered fishing vessel and arrested Ivan Rothstein and Allan Weiner. The FCC took seven hours to dismantle the station which was reportedly investor financed. Rothstein and Weiner faced a whopping maximum sentence of five years in jail and a \$250,000 fine. A September 8th Wall Street Journal editorial said the FCC overreacted.

The defendants stated they selected their unlicensed frequencies so as not to interfere with licensed stations on the mainland. The September 1st edition of "Radio World" reported that Weiner was a long-time radio pirate and reportedly had been FCC cited on two previous occasions for unlicensed broadcasting.

The FCC did not take the radio equipment - merely disassembled it and cut cables. Originally the ship was to have been towed to port and the gear unloaded and stored but the anchor couldn't be raised. The ship later was returned to Weiner and Rothstein - including the radio equipment which they have promised not to operate the station while charges were pending.

The Federal Court for the Eastern District of New York dropped all criminal charges against the two operators providing they didn't do it again. An adult contemporary station, WNYG(AM), Babylon, New York, has authorized disk jockeys involved with the unlicensed operation to air their own legal weekly DJ show called "The Pirate Party." The "pirates" are also planning a lawsuit to address the damage done to their radio gear.